

## **CHAPTER 7A. GENERAL**

### **Section 7A.01 Need for Standards**

#### **Support:**

01 Regardless of the school location, the best way to achieve effective traffic control is through the uniform application of realistic policies, practices, and standards developed through engineering judgment or studies.

02 Pedestrian safety depends upon public understanding of accepted methods for efficient traffic control. This principle is especially important in the control of pedestrians, bicycles, and other vehicles in the vicinity of schools. Neither pedestrians on their way to or from school nor other road users can be expected to move safely in school areas unless they understand both the need for traffic controls and how these controls function for their benefit.

03 Procedures and devices that are not uniform might cause confusion among pedestrians and other road users, prompt wrong decisions, and contribute to crashes. To achieve uniformity of traffic control in school areas, comparable traffic situations need to be treated in a consistent manner. Each traffic control device and control method described in Part 7 fulfills a specific function related to specific traffic conditions.

04 A uniform approach to school area traffic controls assures the use of similar controls for similar situations, which promotes appropriate and uniform behavior on the part of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

05 A school traffic control plan permits the orderly review of school area traffic control needs, and the coordination of school/pedestrian safety education and engineering measures. Engineering measures alone do not always result in the intended change in student and road user behavior.

#### **Guidance:**

06 *A school route plan for each school serving elementary ~~to high school~~ students should be prepared in order to develop uniformity in the use of school area traffic controls and to serve as the basis for a school traffic control plan for each school.*

#### **Option:**

*A school route plan for each school serving middle school or high school students may be prepared.*

#### **Guidance:**

07 *The school route plan, developed in a systematic manner by the school, law enforcement, and traffic officials responsible for school pedestrian safety, should consist of a map (see Figure 7A-1) showing streets, the school, existing traffic controls, established school walk routes, and established school crossings.*

08 *The type(s) of school area traffic control devices used, either warning or regulatory, should be related to the volume and speed of vehicular traffic, street width, and the number and age of the students using the crossing.*

09 *School area traffic control devices should be included in a school traffic control plan.*

#### **Support:**

10 Reduced speed limit signs for school areas and crossings are included in this Manual solely for the purpose of standardizing signing for these zones and not as an endorsement of mandatory reduced speed zones.

11 "School" and "school zone" are defined in Section 1A.13.

Parents, school administrators, traffic officials, civic leaders, and vehicle drivers share the responsibility of educating school pedestrians on the use of traffic control devices. Programs in the home and school to train the child as a responsible pedestrian are an important factor in improving their understanding of traffic control devices.

The words "School Pedestrians", "Children", and "Students" are used interchangeably and could include student bicyclists for the purpose of determining appropriate cross protection measures.

### **Section 7A.02 School Routes and Established School Crossings**

#### **Support:**

01 To establish a safer route to and from school for schoolchildren, the application of planning criterion for school walk routes might make it necessary for children to walk an indirect route to an established school crossing located where there is existing traffic control and to avoid the use of a direct crossing where there is no existing traffic control.

#### **Guidance:**

02 *School walk routes should be planned to take advantage of existing traffic controls.*

03 *The following factors should be considered when determining the feasibility of requiring children to walk a longer distance to a crossing with existing traffic control:*

- A. The availability of adequate sidewalks or other pedestrian walkways to and from the location with existing control,*
- B. The number of students using the crossing,*
- C. The age levels of the students using the crossing, and*
- D. The total extra walking distance.*

**Support:**

There is a need in each school district to establish an organization concerned with students enroute to and from school. Through such an organization, the school district can be responsibly involved in processing requests for traffic safety controls and for safety programs and can coordinate activities within and between the community and public agencies.

In order to provide a responsible administrative structure for the school area, each school district is encouraged to:

1. Assign student pedestrian responsibilities to a competent staff member and/or
2. Organize a school student pedestrian advisory committee to serve the needs of each public and private school.

**Guidance:**

*When the advisory committee structure is used, the committee should include governmental and school district staff who has the responsibility and authority to initiate and provide programs and projects.*

*Representatives from the city and/or county superintendent of schools office should be the official members. Advisors should include representatives of the local area Safety Council, traffic engineers, police authorities, the Parent-Teachers Association, Automobile Clubs (AAA), plus others as needed.*

**Staff and Committee Responsibility:**

**Guidance:**

*The duties of staff members and/or each committee should be to guide and coordinate all activities connected with the school traffic safety program, such as:*

- 1. Establish traffic safety policies and procedures.*
- 2. Recommend priorities for proposed improvement projects.*
- 3. Notify the responsible agencies of school-pedestrian-traffic related issues.*
- 4. Review and approve the various phases of the school student traffic safety program.*
- 5. Review and process requests and complaints.*
- 6. Promote good public relations.*

*The County Superintendent of School's office should coordinate all student pedestrian committees' actions in establishing and promoting uniform practices for school pedestrian safety throughout the county.*

**School Responsibility:**

**Guidance:**

*Traffic related issues about school pedestrians on the approaches to the school should be referred to the school district or local school principal for review and transmission to the appropriate staff person or to the school student pedestrian advisory committee.*

**Support:**

Refer to CVC 21373 for school board request for traffic control devices.

**Government Traffic Agency Responsibility:**

**Standard:**

Upon request of the local school district, responsible traffic authorities shall investigate all locations along the school route and recommend appropriate traffic control measures. Refer to CVC 21373.

**Support:**

The following references from the California Vehicle Code relate to traffic controls for school areas:

1. Section 377 – Limit Line.
2. Section 627 – Engineering and Traffic Survey.
3. Section 21102 – Local Authority to Close Streets.
4. Section 21368 – Crosswalks Near Schools.
5. Section 21372 – Guidelines for Traffic Control Devices Near Schools.
6. Section 21373 – School Board Request for Traffic Control Devices.
7. Section 21458 – Curb Markings.

8. Section 21949 through 21971 – Pedestrians' Rights and Duties.
9. Section 22350 – Basic Speed Law.
10. Section 22352 – Prima Facie Speed Limits.
11. Section 22358.4 – Decrease of Local Limits Near Schools or Senior Centers.
12. Section 22504 – Unincorporated Area Parking; School Bus Stops.
13. Section 40802 – Speed Traps.
14. Section 42200 – Disposition by Cities and Other Local Entities.
15. Section 42201 – Disposition by County.

### **Section 7A.03 School Crossing Control Criteria**

#### **Support:**

<sup>01</sup> The frequency of gaps in the traffic stream that are sufficient for student crossing is different at each crossing location. When the delay between the occurrences of adequate gaps becomes excessive, students might become impatient and endanger themselves by attempting to cross the street during an inadequate gap. In these instances, the creation of sufficient gaps needs to be considered to accommodate the crossing demand.

<sup>02</sup> A recommended method for determining the frequency and adequacy of gaps in the traffic stream is given in the "Traffic Control Devices Handbook" (see Section 1A.11).

Properly conducted engineering and traffic studies will determine the appropriate measures to be developed at school crossings. Types of school pedestrian measures that can be considered can include:

1. Warning signs and markings.
2. School speed limits.
3. Intersection stop signs.
4. Flashing yellow beacons.
5. Traffic signals.
6. Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons.
7. Remove visibility obstructions.
8. School Safety Patrol.
9. Adult Crossing Guard.
10. Pedestrian separation structures.
11. Pedestrian walkways along the roadway.
12. Pedestrian walkways separated from the roadway.
13. Parking controls and curb-use zones.
14. Bus transportation.

### **Section 7A.04 Scope**

#### **Standard:**

<sup>01</sup> **Part 7 sets forth basic principles and prescribes standards that shall be followed in the design, application, installation, and maintenance of all traffic control devices (including signs, signals, and markings) and other controls (including adult crossing guards) required for the special pedestrian conditions in school areas.**

#### **Support:**

<sup>02</sup> Sections 1A.01 and 1A.08 contain information regarding unauthorized devices and messages. Sections 1A.02 and 1A.07 contain information regarding the application of standards. Section 1A.05 contains information regarding the maintenance of traffic control devices. Section 1A.08 contains information regarding placement authority for traffic control devices. Section 1A.09 contains information regarding engineering studies and the assistance that is available to jurisdictions that do not have engineers on their staffs who are trained and/or experienced in traffic control devices.

<sup>03</sup> Provisions contained in Chapter 2A and Section 2B.06 are applicable in school areas.

<sup>04</sup> Part 3 contains provisions regarding pavement markings that are applicable in school areas.

<sup>05</sup> Part 4 contains provisions regarding highway traffic signals that are applicable in school areas. The School Crossing signal warrant is described in Section 4C.06.

**Figure 7A-1. Example of School Route Plan Map**

